Disgraced Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

This play occurs modern day in New York. It centers around a wealthy lawyer, Amir, who has a Muslim heritage but tries to distance himself from that way of life to get ahead in his law career. The entire play takes place in his high end apartment.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

I still hold that the intrusion occurs when Amir realizes he has been quoted in the NY Times and that his firm as been tied to the case as well. This is the event that sparks Amir’s nervousness about his ethnicity and the thing that makes his coworkers look into his family. In class, however, we suggested that the intrusion could actually be at the dinner party as the conversation escalates…

3. What is the *unique factor*?

“Today is the day…” Isaac and Jory come over for dinner at Amir and Emily’s house.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Will Amir embrace his Muslim heritage or his “American lawyer” self? What will his friends and employers think of his decision?

5. List some of the *themes* of the play.

* spousal relations
* discrimination/fear towards Muslims
* what art reveals about its creator
* when it is appropriate to stretch the truth about one’s background

6. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

Emily, I think, really wants emotional support in her marriage. She would like her husband to appreciate and be involved in her art career and spend time with her at home, and when she does not find him giving her these things, she turns to Isaac. Standing in the way of this would be Amir’s demanding work schedule and to some extent, her own nagging about the Muslim faith. Abe initially wants to see Imam Fareed released from prison and his uncle Amir make that happen. At the end of the play, very strongly says he would like to see Muslims take over just as Americans have. This is a strong change from his lighthearted, meek self at the beginning of the play. I think his optimism at the beginning and his rashness at the end stand in the way of him accomplishing anything.

7. After having seen the Town and Gown production of the play write a paragraph each on the following:

\*Note: I did not see the show. I had previous commitments for the weekend.

a. overall quality of the production, realizing that it is not a fully mounted (financially supported) work on the season of Town and Gown.

I am familiar with T&G’s work, and I have been extremely impressed with their plays in the past. Their second stage shows don't get as much practice time or publicity, so they are not as polished as the main stage ones. I heard, however, that this show was not all that it could have been: that the set was weak and the acting was not as full as it needed to be.

b. comment on the acting and focus on your favorite role and it’s execution.

According to what I heard, not all of the actors were well cast in their roles. I would have been very curious to see how they portrayed Isaac because I knew the actor playing him and have worked with him before. In the previous play I was him in, he played a very meek, quiet character, so seeing him have to get angry and impassioned would have been interesting! As we have said in class, I think seeing the play would have given me more sympathy for the characters. Because of that, I would have liked to see Amir’s portrayal in person. I found him very unsympathetic reading the script, but I imagine seeing it live, he would have some more humor.

c. evaluate the directing focusing on the casting of the roles, stage movements, set design, costume design, lighting design, and sound design for the show.

I only know the director as an actor, so I can’t comment on her ability as a director. The class reported, though, that the directing was not very strong and that the play seemed more like a dramatic reading than a story.

Had I directed this play, I think I would have gotten actors of the “correct” ethnicity to play the characters if possible. Normally, an actor’s race doesn't bother me, but for this play, I feel like being invested in the religion you are playing would make your portrayal of the character so much stronger. I would also run the dinner party scene over and over to make sure the timing was close and as powerful as possible. As far as set and lighting go, I would use a lot of glass furniture, both to look modern as well as fragile (like many of the relationships in this play). For lighting, I would use a soft blue light like indoor lights and maybe have a glow outside a window.

d. any unique factors about the production that stand out.

The unique thing about T&G is that it is so small! I imagine the audience felt very involved in the story since they were so close and could see the actors’ expressions well. This short distance, however, would complicate the scene where Amir beats Emily since the audience is so close and it would be hard to both conceal enough of the action to make it safe and show enough to make it convincing.